

25 January 2022

Deputation to the City of Toronto Budget Committee

Dear Chair and Councillors,

We, at Drawdown Toronto, and I especially as a resident of Parkdale High Park, appreciate this opportunity to share our perspective on the strong merits of budgeting for the climate emergency as a key aspect of the future wellbeing of Toronto.

We agree that having a **Net Zero Strategy at the city level is essential** during this time of climate emergency, one that requires applying a climate action lens to all levels of municipal decision making.

By focusing on the **benefits** of taking action we can move from doom scrolling to active hope, without diminishing the urgency of the need to act.

It is clear from research by Project Drawdown that the Return on Investment of implementing carbon reduction strategies is many times the cost - globally estimated at 500% over 30 years.

Acknowledging the budgetary pressures experienced by the City, we urge Council to fund Transform TO fully to enable it to fulfill its mandate to help Toronto achieve Net Zero by 2040.

The following measures will not only provide greater comfort but will improve productivity, job growth and the social benefits that ensue.

1. **Retrofit existing residential and commercial buildings** from dependency on fossil fuels is a key strategy for reaching net zero:
 - a. Although the upfront costs are prohibitive and existing grants insufficient for low income owners to undergo conversion.
 - b. purposely created existing software and private sector financing may be a solution worth exploring - a link to which is in the written document.
 1. <https://www.bloccpower.io/press-release/testimony-donnel-baird>
2. **Address food waste.** Drawdown research points to reduction of food waste as the most productive activity for drawing down Greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere.

As most landfills are outside the city, and may therefore not have been counted in the 7% of emissions attributed to waste in the planning analysis, the methane produced from organic degradation is a major contributor to the climate crisis.

 - a. Wasted food when there is hunger is unconscionable.
 - b. Therefore we wholeheartedly support Toronto fully implementing its commitments to its *C40 Good Food City* declaration.

- c. The City should ban the disposal of still edible food products, as have other major European cities, like Paris and mandate supermarkets to make unsold food to organizations like Second Harvest and Feed it Forward.
 - d. Expand the green bin program to include all multi-unit buildings with bins in each disposal area, with compensation for large buildings for increased janitorial costs.
 - e. While other deputants will certainly highlight this, the potential for urban farming along with community based, open air composting programs is another low cost way to address the climate and the economy at the same time.
3. **Manage refrigerants.** Drawdown research has shown that refrigerant management is among the top climate strategies, but does not appear in the net zero strategy.
- a. The widely used Hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerant liquid can have 3000 times the global warming potential (GWP) of CO₂.
 - b. These include refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners and ice rinks as well as **heat pumps**.
 - c. City by-law change could help enforce compliance with federal conversion mandates.

Conclusion

We would like to thank City staff and City Council for their courageous willingness to set a clear plan for a Net Zero Strategy for Toronto.

We hope that the thought and passion expressed in this process will help provide the political impetus to take the many necessary actions to implement the Strategy, and in doing so, create a more equitable and sustainable city.

On behalf of Drawdown Toronto,

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